

On Doing Violence to the Kingdom

David R. Catchpole

Few sayings have exercised a more dynamic influence over studies of the Gospel tradition than Matthew 11.12-13 (par. Luke 16.16ba), with its correlation of the two ideas of violence and God's kingship. Since Hans Conzelmann /1 claimed that the Lukan form provides 'the key to the topography of redemptive history', its central position in redaction-critical studies of Lukan theology has been secure. And since Ernest Käsemann, in his famous lecture of 20 October 1953 inaugurating the so-called new quest of the historical Jesus, /2 made the Matthaean form the climax of his call for a recognition of the implicit christology contained in Jesus' own words, it has been imperative to reconstruct the history of this tradition and to determine its original significance.

Since this article is ultimately concerned with the earliest form of the tradition, the view of Kaeseman is more relevant. For him the original (authentic Jesus) form ran broadly as follows: "The law and the prophets are in force until John; from the days of the Baptist until now/today the kingdom of God suffers violence and is hindered by men of violence." On such a basis, with eloquent forcefulness and with language echoing sometimes Luke and sometimes Luther, Kaeseman declares: "The OT epoch of salvation history concludes with the Baptist, who himself already belonged to the new epoch and is not to be counted among the prophets. The situation in this epoch is that the kingdom of God has already dawned but is still being obstructed." Where does this put John? He "stands in the shadow of him who now speaks and utters his 'until today'". And who then is Jesus? "He who brings with his Gospel the kingdom itself: a kingdom which can yet be obstructed and snatched away for the very reason that it appears in the defenceless form of the Gospel." In sum, "it was the belief of Jesus that, in his word, the kingdom was coming to his hearers." /3 Such an understanding of Jesus proved epoch-making in the history of research but now, just over twenty-five years after Kaesemann spoke, it is important to examine

(a) whether his reconstruction of the earliest form of the tradition was right, (b) whether the Baptist is indeed overshadowed by Jesus in this saying, (c) whether the kingdom was coming in Jesus' word and (d) whether we can pinpoint the nature of the violence.

1. Matthew 11.12f in the Matthaean context

The verbal agreement between Matthew and Luke is sufficient to show that we are dealing with Q material. At the same time the two versions disagree in setting and internal arrangement. Whereas Matthew's context deals with John the Baptist, Luke begins with this saying a trio of law-oriented sayings (16.16-18) in an overall context concerned with property and prosperity (16.1-31). Additionally, whereas Matthew has the statement linking John and the kingdom first, Luke has it second. We need to judge how well the Matthaean features match tendencies in Matthaean theology in order to uncover any pre-Matthaean, i.e. Q features.

Already at the Q stage the material presented in Matthew 11 showed two distinct tendencies, sometimes considering John favourably in his own right (Matthew 11.11b). Matthew's own view is expressed in the redactional section (11.14f), i.e., in the John=Elijah equation which W. Trilling has quite rightly called the climax in Matthew's train of thought. /4 Now in this statement of Matthew's own view (i) the description of Elijah as "the one who is about to come" uses the verb 'mello' which clearly makes him a participant in eschatological events. Such a nuance is required by Matthaean usage elsewhere, e.g., in the references to "the wrath which is about to come" (3.7=Lk 3.7), "neither in this age nor in the one which is about to come" (12.32, diff. Mark 3.29/Lk 12.10), /5 and "the Son of man is about to come" (16.27; diff. Mk 8.38). Matthew is able to fasten on to the quotation of Malachi 3.1 in 11.10 (= Lk 7.27), which was itself designed to amplify the phrase "more than a prophet". /6 That phrase had promoted John above the rank of prophet so that, while there is an aspect of his person which does not necessarily bring him into the setting of eschatological fulfilment, the point of real concern which is emphasized by the quotation and re-emphasized by Matthew is that John does belong to the period of

fulfilment as an eschatological participant.

This has an important bearing on the prima facie ambiguous language in Matt 11.12f and in particular on the double use of the preposition "until" (heos) in the phrases "from the days of John the Baptist until now" (v12) and "until John" (v13). In itself this preposition, designed to indicate a limiting point in time (e.g., 17.17= Mk 9.19; 27.45= Mk 15.33; 28.20), can either include what happens at that point (so 24.21= Mk 13.19; 27.8) or exclude what happens at that point (so 26.29 diff. Mk 14.25). Therefore only the context can clarify the sense. In this context 11.12 uses "until" as part of a double time-note in which "the days of John the Baptist" stand for the period of his public activity (cf. similar references in 2.1- 23.30; diff. Lk 11.48; 24.37= Luke 17.26). Reference to such a period rather than to a mere point of time suggests that "from the days of John the Baptist" is inclusive and that "until now" which merely fixes the moment of speaking is also inclusive. /8 However, the conjunction "for" makes v13 the basis of v22 and therefore a reference to the change which takes place at the time when John's activity starts. Therefore "until" is inclusive in v12 and exclusive in v13, so that the latter does not include John in the activity covered by the verb "to prophesy". That means theologically that v12ff see John as belonging to the period of fulfilment and eschatological participation, and therefore that the outlook of 11.12f is identical with the outlook of the redactional 11.14f. It means also in terms of the present sequence involving 11.11, that Matthew is concerned to follow up the reference to the kingdom in 11.11b but to qualify emphatically and adversatively the depreciating comment which separates John from the kingdom.

At the same time as we reach this conclusion about 11.12 and 11.14ff we must notice internal signs of awkwardness within 11.12f. (i) A description of two points of time is most logically formulated with the first one coming first, and all the more so when the content of what is said about the first is the basis of what is said about the second. (ii) The reference to law is odd in that Matthew says nothing more about it in his context. Not only so, the law as the subject of the verb "to prophesy" is odd as is the order of "the prophets and the law". While these

awkwardnesses might be characteristic of the original tradition which has subsequently been improved,⁹ they are more likely to stem from the well-attested Matthaean habit of sacrificing stylistic smoothness for the sake of overriding concern.

At this point some counter-arguments marshalled by P. Hoffmann /10 have to be considered. He finds in the word "all" (11.12) a tendency to generalize and expand which diverges from the tendency to delimit the reference to John the Baptist and make it more exact (11.14), so that both features cannot in his view be Matthaean-redactional. On this basis he finds that "all" not only antedates Matthew but also in consequence requires syntactically the order "the prophets and the law" and the verb "to prophesy". Moreover, he argues, Luke 16.16a is the secondary version, reflecting both Lukan theology and the Hellenistic critique of law. This is not convincing for the following reasons: (i) The concentration on John in 11.14 is precisely the consequence of his initiating period of fulfilment, which is not the case in respect of the prophets as a whole. In other words the differentiation noted by Hoffmann is not an indication of a different literary situation but part of the scheme which pinpoints a change with John. (ii) Matthew's repeated insistence on the preparatory role of a wide range of prophets, comprising Isaiah (1.22f, etc), Jeremiah (2.18, etc) Daniel (26.64), Hosea (2.15), Micah (2.6), Zechariah (21.5, etc), and Malachi (11.10), is quite sufficient to provoke the "all". (iii) The present form of Luke 16.16a must certainly antedate the attempt, whether by Luke or by the editor of Q, to qualify and defuse its explosive force by adding Luke 16.17.

So we can conclude that several of the features distinguishing Matt 11.12f from Luke 16.16 are in harmony with the pattern of Matthaean redactional activity in the context, but that Matthew still leaves behind evidence of a pre-Matthaean tradition whose first half spoke about "the law and the prophets" but without the accompanying verb "to prophesy". /11 This suggests that this same first half defined the span or validity of law and prophets as coming to a climax with John the Baptist.

2. Luke 16.16ab in the Lukan context

The trio of sayings in Luke 16.16,17,18 is held together by

a common concern with law: 16.16a speaks of a time limit on law (and prophets), 16.17 deals with the authority of every detail in the law, and 16.18 is legal in formulation ("Every one who...and he who...") even though in substance it undermines one specific law in Deut. 24.1-4. Therefore three originally separate sayings have been brought together by a common concern with law in spite of considerable tension between their outlooks. This bringing together is not, however, the work of Luke for two reasons. Firstly, the trio interrupts his overall sequence in Luke 16. Certainly the movement from the theme of riches/property in 16.1-15 to the theme of law and prophets in 16.16 matches the movement from the rich v. poor contrast in 16.19-26 to the witness of "Moses and the prophets" in 16.27-31, but there remains too much of the content of 16.16-18 which is not relevant to the concerns of Luke 16 as a whole to encourage the view that Luke has brought all the disparate traditions together. Secondly, there is a schematic agreement with material in Matt.5: Lk 16.16,17,18 corresponds to Matt.5.17, 18,32. /12

In connection with this pre-Lukan collection of sayings the relationship between Matt 5.17 and Lk 16.16, the two varying versions of the "law and prophets" saying, is particularly important. (i) Only rarely in the gospel tradition do we meet with the combination "the law and the prophets", i.e. in Matt 5.17; in 7.12 (diff. Luke 6.31) which combines with 5.17 to bracket the main section of the Sermon on the Mount and is therefore Matthaean redaction; in 22.40 (diff Mark 12.31) where the addition of "the prophets" is clearly redactional; in Lk 24.44, "the law and the prophets and the psalms", which looks very much like Lukan redaction; and in Luke 16.16! Matthew is therefore prepared to introduce references to "the law and the prophets", but the schematic agreement between Matt.5.17 and Luke 16.16 suggests that such has not happened here. Moreover, the fact that Matt 5.17 and Luke 16.16 are the only such references to have any claim to rest on earlier traditions reinforces the likelihood that they are not unrelated. (ii) Both Matt 5.17 and Luke 16.16a deal with the problem of defining the period of the validity of the law and prophets. Whereas Mt 5.17 says there is no limit on such validity and that Jesus most definitely did not impose one, Luke 16.16a positively encourages the idea of

81

such a limit. That means that underlying both versions there is a common concern with one specific problem, so that in one version a suggestion is put forward only to be rebutted by the other. The necessary corollary is that the Vorlage of both was indeed dangerously radical. (iii) In terms of form Matt 5.17 is heavily indebted to Matthaean redaction as its correspondence with 10.34 (diff Luke 12.51) demonstrates. But the presence of a Vorlage is also attested by its internal awkwardness: an overall concern with law (thus 5.17 leads directly into 5.18,19) has produced an antithesis between "abolish" and "fulfil" which is thoroughly fitting (cf. 2 Macc 2.22; 4 Macc 5.33; Josephus Ant. 13.296,408) in a discussion of law and thoroughly unfitting in a discussion of prophets. Prophets can be "fulfilled" but scarcely "abolished". This awkwardness has led some to regard the words "and the prophets" as a later addition, but this suggestion does not square with the evidence of tradition already mentioned. Therefore internal evidence suggests that underlying Matt 5.17 there is a saying which refers to "the law and the prophets", and in such a way as to suggest that the point in time has been reached at which their validity ends.

As far as the significance of Luke 16.16ab in the Lukan context is concerned we can therefore record another preliminary result to the effect that there was a pre-Lukan collection on which Luke 16.16-18 is based and within which a time-limit was imposed on "law and prophets". Not only does this converge with the results of our study of Matt 11.12f in the Matthaean context but it has two other implications. Firstly, if one "law and prophets" sayings underlies both Matt 5.17 and 11.13, we can see a certain symmetry in the two passages where Matthew used that saying: in 5.17 the concentration was upon law, with fulfilment the superimposed control, while in 11.13 the concentration was on prophets with prediction the superimposed control. Secondly, the absence of any allusion in the Matt 11 context to the Matt 5.18= Luke 16.17 and the Matt 5.32=Luke 16.18 material, with which the archetype of Matt 5.17/11.13= Luke 16.16a belonged, suggests that the present position of Matt 11.12f is the product of Matthaean redaction. /13 Confirmation of that suggestion, however, depends also on the results of the following section.

3. The bridge between Matt 11.7-11 = Luke 7.24-28
and Matt 11.16-19 = Luke 7. 31-35 in Q

Matthew and Luke agree in presenting some material between these two Q sections, though they differ in the material presented. So far our investigation has taken account of Matt 11.12-15 but not of Luke 7.29f, and it is to this latter that we now turn.

Within Luke 7.29f there are several indications that pre-Lukan tradition is involved. (i) The opening statement that "all the people having heard and the tax collectors justified God..." is extremely rough: the subjects of the verb are split, and the intervening participle relates to one subject and not the other. This is most easily explained if an earlier source has had either the words "the tax collectors" or "all the people having heard" transposed. Since "all the people having heard" is typical of Lukan redaction it is likely that "the tax collectors" figured in underlying tradition. /14 (ii) Some of the vocabulary is not at all typical of Luke. This is true of "to justify" with God as object which typifies Semitic but not Lukan usage (cf. Ps.Sol.2.16; 3.5; 4.9; 8.7,27). It is also true of "to reject" (atheteo) which does not occur in Acts and elsewhere in Luke only at 10.16 where it is probably the Q wording. Finally, the word "lawyer" occurs twice in Titus but elsewhere in Matt 22.35 = Luke 10.25 (therefore Q) and in Luke 11.45,46,52,53 (where it is probably Q or at least Lukan reminiscence of Q). (iii) Contrary to the tendency shown elsewhere in Luke there is no subordination of John to Jesus in 7.29f.

The existence of pre-Lukan material can be confirmed and made more pointed in the direction of Q by virtue of the substantial overlapping of Luke 7.29f and Matt.21.32. /16 The latter states "For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and even when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe him." This is clearly a secondary addition to the parable /17 of the two sons, which comes to a climax in the "Truly I say to you....." declaration of 21.31 and which in terms of content has nothing to do with John. Matthaean redactional concern

to assimilate this parable to the discussion of John is already clear from (i) the positioning of the parable immediately after Mark 11.27-33 = Matt 21.23-27, which debated the topic of authority by reference to John, and (ii) the assimilation to the wording of Mark 11.31 in Matt 21.32 itself: "you did not believe him...they believed him.. you did not believe him". But in addition to this evidence there are four features linking Matt 21.32 and Luke 7.29f: the common reference to John, the common reference to tax collectors, the common use of the "righteousness" word group, and the common antithesis between the tax collectors who respond to him and others who reject him.

We can now add the contribution of a series of features of Matt 21.32 which look like reminiscences of the material presently surrounding Luke 7.29f in Luke and which strengthen the view that this was the context of the Vorlage of Luke 7.29f in Q. (i) "John came..." This formulation occurs in the synoptic tradition only at Matt 21.32 and Matt 11.18 = Luke 7.33. Coincidence is hardly a likely explanation, and any idea of dependence on Matt 21.32 is ruled out, of course. Therefore it is very likely that Matthew's wording is reminiscent of the Q saying which is most easily explained if his attention was drawn to it by the immediate context. (ii) "The way of righteousness". Following the retrospective view of the mission of John as a whole which is implicit in "John came..." (and indeed in the discussion of John's baptism and authority in 21.23-27), Matthew's reference to "the way of righteousness" should probably be taken as programmatic, i.e. the implementing of a plan rather than (as understood by W. Michaelis /19) a description of John's character as righteous. This sense of a plan not only matches the sense of the Lukan purpose (7.30) but it also recalls the immediately preceding reference to Malachi 3.1 "he shall prepare your way before you" (Matt 11.10 = Luke 7.27). When the same quotation occurs in Mark 1.2 Michaelis interprets it in terms of "plan", "enterprise", "work", /20 and I doubt whether hesitation should be shown in seeing this same implication in the Q quotation. Given the extreme rareness of the term "way" with this implication it is all the more likely that Matt 21.32 is a reminiscence of Matt 11.10 = Luke 7.27.

The third section of this investigation can therefore be

wound up with the conclusion that there was a tradition underlying Matt 21.32/Luke 7.29f and acting in Q as a bridge between Matt 11.7-11 = Luke 7.24-28 and Matt 11.16-19 = Luke 7.31-35. This exactly fits the conclusions of earlier sections, to the effect that the Vorlage of Matt 11.12f belonged, not to the present Matthaean Q context, but to the present Lukan Q context. The tendency to re-order material is in general much greater in Matthew than in Luke, and this tendency is being encountered here again.

4. The original wording of the tradition

The argument so far has suggested, firstly, that Luke's order (16.16ab = Matt 11.13,12) is more probably original; secondly, that the original subject of the saying's first half was "the law and the prophets"; thirdly, that "all" and "to prophesy" are secondary Matthaean alterations; fourthly, that the original saying implied the fixing of a time limit on "the law and the prophets". It remains to determine the preposition used in the first half and the wording in general of the second half of the saying.

In the first case mexri seems the most likely word for "until". /21 It occurs infrequently in the gospels and Acts (Mark 13.30- Matt 11.23; 13.30; 28.15; Luke 16.16; Acts 10.30; 20.7). Signs of a tendency away from it are provided by the change to heōs in Matt 24.34/Luke 21.32 (diff Mark 13.30). Moreover in Matt 11.23 Jesus declares against Capernaum, "If the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until (mexri) this day." This is a remodelled version of Luke 10.12 (= Matt 10.15). Coming in the Matthaean sequence so soon after Matt 11.13, the occurrence of this untypical word looks like a reminiscence of the earliest form of that saying.

In the second case, there is widespread agreement that the words "of God" are more likely to be primitive than "of heaven" but that otherwise Luke 16.16b reflects typical Lukan redactional tendencies. The whole "violence" complex expresses Lukan convictions very happily when it is a matter of everyone entering forcibly into the kingdom of God in response to gospel preaching, but the Matthaean form is less easily absorbed and accommodated. The main area of doubt

is the time note which in Matt 11.12 runs: "from the days of John the Baptist until now". (i) The words "the Baptist" could well be a Matthaean redaction in line with Matt 3.1 (diff Mark 1.4) and 17.13 (diff Mark 9.13), and in this case the emphasis on baptism in the Q bridge section Luke 8.29f could well be making its influence felt in the double reference to "the Baptist" in Matt 11.11 (diff Luke 7.28) and 11.12 (diff Luke 16.16b). Moreover, the more detailed definition of John's person is apt in the first half of the bipartite saying referring to him (so Matthew) but not in the second half (so Q). Therefore Q is unlikely to have contained the words "the Baptist". (ii) The words "from the days of John" could conceivably be a Matthaean redactional replacement for "from then". /22 However, it is unlikely that Matthew would suppress his favourite link word "then" or indeed the phrase "from then" which elsewhere he three times introduces (4.17 diff Mark 1.14; 16.21 diff Mark 8.31; 26.16 diff Mark 14.11) and never drops. Further, it has already been noted that a reference to "the days of..." occurs elsewhere in Q (Matt 24.37 = Luke 17.26). So "from the days of John" is likely to be pre-Matthaean. (iii) The words "until now" have a slight query hanging over them. The preposition heos is typical of Matthaean redaction while arti occurs redactionally at 3.15- 9.18 (diff Mark 5.23)- 23.39 (?diff Luke 13.35)- 26.39 (diff Mark 14.45); 26.53 (without parallel); and 26.64 (diff Mark 14.62). On the other hand there is no clear reason for the insertion of "until now" /23 , and present, rather than aorist, tenses of the verb "suffers violence" and "take by force" read more smoothly if such a time-note is present.

Therefore the Q form of the tradition probably corresponded almost exactly to Luke 16.16a + Matt 11.12:

The law and the prophets were until (mexri)John;
From the days of John until (heos) now (arti)
the kingdom of God suffers violence (biazetai)and
And men of violence (biastai)take is by force
(harpazousin)

5. The origin and meaning of the reconstructed tradition.

The implications of Luke 16.16a are radical indeed for the "law and the prophets", so radical in fact that it was felt

necessary to add immediately the tradition underlying Matt 5.18 = Luke 16.17 in order to contain its explosive force. (It scarcely needs saying that the interpretation of Luke 16.16a must firmly distance itself from that originally unconnected statement of the lasting validity of the law.) In fact, no one with traditional Jewish theological reflexes would have generated the saying in question. Could it be that, as S. Schulz has suggested, /24 it belongs to the Hellenistic-Christian stratum in Q and that, as P. Hoffmann /25 argued, it presupposes the Hellenistic critique of the law? That would leave unexplained the singling out of John rather than Jesus as the person by reference to whom the crisis for law and prophets is defined. In this saying, which is both critical in respect of "law and prophets" and complimentary towards John, it is much more likely that we hear the voice of Jesus and, in effect, the expression of an outlook which ultimately developed into the Hellenistic critique of law.

This brings us to Matt 11.12. The relationship between Luke 16.16a and Matt 11.12 is so close, being at one and the same time complementary, symmetrical and antithetical, that the occasional suggestion that the two were originally separate (so for example G. Barth /26) has little attractiveness. But the details in Matt 11.12 itself have still to be interpreted, and that applies to both the mention of violence and the time note.

As G. Schrenk argued long since /29 , the verb harpazein and the language of violence together indicate opposition and so ensure that both are used in malam partem (cf. Josephus, Ant. 20.214). The usage of the former in the NT normally involves one of two senses, either an ecstatic "catching up" (e.g. Acts 8.39; 2 Cor 12.2,4) or an adverse use of force (e.g. Matt 12.29; John 10.12; Acts 23.10). Consequently Matt 11.12 is describing neither a "movement of passionate longing" (J. Weiss /28) nor "the host of eager penitents which is wringing the kingdom from God so that it may now come at any moment" (A. Schweitzer /29) , but rather hostility suffered and opposition experienced by God's kingship. While rabbinic literature from the third century AD knows about violence as a means designed to bring in the end /30 , the texts are too late in time for the understanding of Matt 11.12 and Billerbeck rightly observes that the meaning is different here. The closest parallel is probably in the Qumran material's notion of an

eschatological Holy War between good and evil forces on both supernatural and human levels. /31 In the context of 1QH 2. 10-17, 20-30 and 6. 22b-35 particular note must be taken of the speaker's claims: "I was exposed to the affronts of the wicked, and an object of slander on the lips of the violent" (2.10f) and "violent men have sought my soul because I leaned on your covenant; but they are an assembly of vanity and a congregation of Belial" (2.21f).

This is of some importance when allied to the implications of the time note "from the days of John until now". The tracing of the violence back to the time when John's mission began precludes any reference to the Zealots /32, for the Zealot movement anticipated John by some twenty years. On the other hand the association between John and the kingdom of God needs to be explained. That association can be understood, and almost certainly must be understood, in terms of preaching. That is, John the Baptist is here regarded as having preached the coming kingdom and experienced strong opposition, and the same pattern of preaching and experience now characterizes Jesus. Such an explanation would explain how a stimulus was provided for Matthew in two areas: (i) He puts in the mouth of John the message that Jesus preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (3.2, diff Mark 1.1, cf 1.15), just as elsewhere he assimilates Jesus to John. (ii) He uses harpazein for opposition directed at the "word" in 13.19 (diff Mark 4.15). But more importantly the setting or the context of the activity of the "violent ones" in 11.12 corresponds to the setting of the activity of the violent ones in 1QH whose attack is (i) immediately pre-eschatological - so 1QH 2.23f; 6.29-33 - and (ii) directed against the person who, in his view, possesses the authentic understanding of the will of God and the authorised status for communicating it - so 1QH 2.13f, 17f.

This interpretation of Matt 11.12 in terms of eschatological imminence diverges from the view of Kaesemann which has been stated above and followed by a very substantial number of scholars. /33 But that view is in any case open to dispute. Firstly, there is no indication (pace Kaesemann) that the "now/today" gives any significance to Jesus over and above that attached to John. Indeed, since the "now" is not itself a point of change, the formulation is similar in intent to that in Mark 13.19 = Matt 24.21: "In those days

there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will be." The words "until now" (heos tou nun) merely allude to the moment of speaking but mark no change of any sort, let alone deeper significance. This leads to the second point, namely, that the presence of the kingdom in the sense suggested simply cannot be predicated of the Baptist's mission, but rather at most the preaching of the near kingdom. Such an emphasis on nearness, that is, imminence rather than realization, allows Matt 11.12 to stand on its own feet without any support from, for example, Matt 12.28 which has no reference to John; it also keeps the saying free from the influence of those secondary developments appearing in Luke 16.16b; it also avoids the logical pitfall of assuming that if the kingdom is assaulted then it must be present; Moreover, it presents a view of John and his preaching which is wholly and without strain in line with the authentic tradition preserved at the beginning of Q. Finally, if Jesus is here associated with John in such a way that the latter is in no way depreciated, then this saying in Matt 11.12 (like its partner in Luke 16.16a) very probably originated with Jesus.

In Matt 11.12, therefore, opposition to the kingdom is the meaning attached to opposition to the preaching of the nearness of God's kingdom, preaching which characterizes John and Jesus alike. But the full implication of this material can only emerge when Luke 16.16a and Matt 11.12 are clamped together and interpreted as a single whole. When this is done, the emergent scheme involving two successive periods could be taken as the germ of a salvation-historical programme. This would, however, probably represent a shift in emphasis and a slight confusion of Jesus with Luke. The emphasis should rather be discerned on the basis of the correlation of two contexts, that is, the preaching of the near kingdom versus the law and the prophets, and the preachers of the near kingdom versus the violent ones. This has a double significance. Firstly, it means that two contrasting interpretations and expressions of the will/claim/demand of God are envisaged when "law and prophets" are mentioned but immediately relegated in favour of the preaching of the near kingdom. Now they are no longer an adequate basis for an understanding of the will of God or an adequate articulation of the word of God. Now, in the new

situation, everything is tested and controlled and determined by the call of the near kingdom. Secondly, it means that the violent ones are those who not only fail to respond to the preaching of the near kingdom but also oppose it in the name of the continuing relevance or applicability or efficacy or authority of the law and the prophets. So conservative theologians (of all people) turn out to be the violent ones, the persons who set out to "jam" the transmission of the word and call of God announced by John and Jesus!

This interpretation receives corroboration in three related areas: (i) In the analogous situation outlined in 1QH the forces opposed to one another on the human level differ precisely over the question of how the will of God is to be understood and interpreted. The speaker, like John and Jesus, understands himself as possessing the true view of the will of God although, unlike them, he remains thoroughly grounded in law. (ii) The displacement of "law and prophets" is similar to the displacement of the Abrahamic connection in the Baptist's preaching (Matt 3.10 = Luke 3.9). It is not so much that John attacks the Abrahamic link in itself as that he insists that it is no longer a basis for dealings with God. Now, on the eve of crisis, the all-controlling preoccupation must be with God as coming judge. (iii) The oft-quoted parallel in Matt 23.12 = Luke 11.5a can now be claimed as coming truly into its own. "Woe to you, lawyers", thunders Jesus, "for you lock the kingdom of Heaven against men: you yourselves will not enter and you try to prevent those who would go in." Those who combine devotion to the law and resistance to the kingdom find themselves struggling with Jesus and overshadowed by his eschatological woe.

In this earliest form of the so-called Stürmerspruch we therefore find ourselves taken to the heart of the mission of Jesus. According to him, the encounter between God and man and the relationship between man and God is not and can no longer be based on law and prophets. In spite of attempts by Luke, Matthew and even the editor of Q to de-radicalize him and indeed John the Baptist, attempts which in varying degrees displace eschatology in favour of salvation history, the sharp edge of the message of both John and Jesus can still be recovered. Through both equally there sounded the message of the kingdom radically new and dangerously near.

Notes

1. The Theology of Saint Luke (London 1961), p23
2. Reprinted in Essays on NT Themes (London, 1964) pp15-47
3. op.cit., pp42f.
4. "Die Thüfertradition bei Matthäus", BZ 3 (1959), 271-289 (279).
5. The abbreviation 'diff' indicates that one version of given material differs from another.
6. We may compare the similar thrust of the "a greater than Solomon is here" and "a greater than Jonah is here" sayings, applied to Jesus and also in Q (Matt 12.42,41 = Luke 11.31,32).
7. It is therefore not correct to view the presentation of John as prophet as the major concern of the passage, as suggested by E. Klostermann, Das Matthäusevangelium (Tübingen, 2nd ed., 1927); R. Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition (Oxford 1963), p164.
8. Similarly, Trilling, art.cit., 278; D. Daube, The NT and Rabbinic Judaism (London 1956) p286 draws attention to the parallel in 1 Kings 1.6
9. A. Harnack, The Sayings of Jesus (London 1908), p16, argues thus but then reconstructs the Q form in line with Luke, with the exception of the order "the prophets and the law".
10. Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle (Münster 1972), pp50-60
11. Similarly, J. Schmid, Matthäus und Lukas (Freiburg 1930), p285; Trilling, art.cit., 276-279.
12. See H. Schürmann, Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den synoptischen Evangelien (Düsseldorf 1968), pp117f.
13. Similarly, Schmid, op.cit., p284; Trilling, art.cit., 276
14. H. Schürmann, Das Lukasevangelium I (Freiburg 1969), p421.
15. Thus, the overlap between "lawyers" in Luke 11.45 and the Matthaean redactional "weightier matters of the law" in 23.23 suggests that Luke has preserved the Q formulation.
16. Schürmann, Lukas, pp422ff.
17. J. Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus (London 1963), p80
18. We need not therefore adopt the unsupported suggestion of Jeremias (grounded in objections to the existence of Q) that v32 was a pre-Matthaean addition to the parable, op.cit., pp80ff.
19. hodos, W. Michaelis TDNT 5 (1967), pp42-96 (86f)
20. Op.cit., p70
21. Otherwise, S. Schulz, Q - Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten (Zürich 1972), p261.
22. So Schulz, op.cit., p262
23. Hoffmann, op.cit., p52
24. op.cit., p264

25. Op.cit., p60
26. G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, H.J. Held, Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew (London 1963), p63.
27. Biazomai, G. Schrenk, TDNT I (1964), pp609-614. Even though harpazein can denote an action which is approved (cf. Matt 12.29/Mark 3.27), the object of the action will make the approval clear, and opposition is clearly involved.
28. Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God (London, ET 1971), p70
29. The Quest of the Historical Jesus (London³, 1954), pp355f)
30. P. Billerbeck, Handkommentar I, p598f
31. O. Betz, "Jesu heiliger Krieg", NovT 2 (1957), 116-137 (118-121).
32. Contra J. Wellhausen, Das Evangelium Matthaei (Berlin 1904), p54; G. Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth (London 1960), p73
33. G. Schrenk, art.cit., p613; W.G. Kümmel, Promise and fulfilment, (London 1961), pp121f; E. Schweizer, The Good News According to Matthew (London 1976), p262; W. Wink, John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition (Cambridge 1968), p19; N. Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus (London 1967), p76f; O. Betz, art.cit., 126, appealing however to Matt 11.5 and 12.28.
34. This article was first published in the Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 25 (1978), 50-61, and is reprinted here by kind permission of the Editor.
35. Dr David R. Catchpole is Senior Lecturer in the Dept of Religious Studies of Lancaster University, Author of The Trial of Jesus. (Leiden 1971) and at present External Examiner for Queen's University in New Testament - Ed.